Trope: College AU (Valhalla Enchanted - Modern AU)

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by TigerPrawn

Summary

When Char mistakes an alpha's true appearance for a costume he means to apologise, but ends up doing much more than that!

Notes

Prompt Fill, also for #SpookyABO and #Hannictober prompts - Sexy Halloween Costume and Halloween Party

Massive love to Jadegreenworks/Purefoysgirl whose amazing fic Overcoming inspired Char's Halloween costume!
Never ending love to Hotsauce418's naming of One Eye - Frank. He will always be Frank in my heart!

- Inspired by Overcoming by purefoysgirl

Chapter 1

Char worried his teeth at his lower lip as he looked up at the frat house, as he smelled the frat house.

He had passed it during the day, strung with cobwebs, but now the sun had gone down he saw that it had been decorated for the Halloween party in the most garish fashion possible. But more overwhelming than the flashing orange lights now illuminated, was the scent. Char was sure he'd never actually been around so many alphas in such a small area before, it wasn't like being in at one of the team games or class. He knew most of the alphas in this fraternity, had mated with someone of them.

"Are you sure about this?" Ella asked as she got out of the car and joined him on the curb. "Who even invited you anyway?"

Char grinned at her. "Oh, some jock. I didn't catch his name." He flashed a brilliant smile that had her frowning. They had known each since early teens - after he had moved to Frell. They had always planned to go to the same college, and so they did. They were practically siblings and she took none of his shit.

"Well, I'm going on record as saying this is a bad idea." She started to get back into the car, ready to leave him there to his fate. Frat parties weren't exactly her scene, she'd even taken some persuading to give him a ride.

"Pfft, what's the worst that could happen?" Char was still grinning, trying to ignore the damper she was trying to put on it. Always his voice of reason.

"Oh I don't know? Maybe two or three alphas start fighting over you and campus security is called?"

Char frowned. “That was one time, and the Dean found the alphas responsible, not me.”

“That time!” Ella insisted. “If you keep setting them off for your own amusement - like the spoiled brat you are - you’ll finally get the blame. You could get kicked out of school. How do you think your uncle would feel about that?”

She quirked a brow and he poked his tongue out at her. Juvenile, yes, but he wanted to hide the slight quake that actually gave him. His uncle was an asshole, but until he graduated and got the massive trust fund his parents had bestowed him, they were stuck with each other. Getting kicked out of school meant having to go back and live with him, and his constant snide remarks and disappointment. A beta who was jealous of everything about Char - his ease with people, his popularity, his impending wealth.

A far cry from the treatment he received at school, and Char liked to make the most of that… though perhaps within reason now?

Ella gave a small wave and was gone, leaving Char to think on exactly how much trouble he’d let himself get into tonight. Because being kicked out of school was not an option.

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One, just one. Make it a good one. Char was thinking to himself over and over as he headed up the path.

Ella was right, one of his favourite pastimes was to play alphas off against each other. It was always all the more amusing with jocks too. Flirt with one, let a different one knot you, let the first one catch the scent. He’d always enjoyed stirring up shit like that. It always seemed a way to get a little escape from his homelife and snub his nose to his prim uncle. And since getting to college… woah boy, there were a lot of jocks here.

But Ella was *also* right that a drunken frat party, as much fun as it presented, was definitely a potential for trouble - too much trouble. He’d have to settle for a casual pick up - no teasing these silly fellows. It had been a couple of weeks since he last got laid, so a nice knotting, at the least, would not go amiss.

Char wasn’t surprised to turn heads when he entered the house - taking in the heady scent and adjusting to the loud music. The room had more cobwebs, but also pumpkins and various other Halloween decorations. Everyone was in some sort of costume.

He was well known at the school - a popular omega, well liked though he could be a spoilt rich kid at times. He knew how beautiful they found him, how desired he was. He enjoyed their respect despite the fact that he sometimes played little games with them. They tolerated that as they would from any free omega.

From the lust filled looks and, yes, even the slight change of the scents in the air to something altogether more instinctively enticing - Char knew every single alpha in the room was enjoying the sight of his costume.

Except one.

His eyes narrowed in on the guy stood by the window - staring off at something outside. He had looked around at him, as the rest had when he entered the room, and then returned to his vigil whilst the others lingered. The alpha was broad and dressed in dark clothing. He was wearing a halloween mask or some great makeup because his face was scarred and his eye was gnarly. Must have put some real effort in, considering pretty much all the other frat brothers were dressed in store bought costumes.

Char's own costume was arguably simple but pricey - dressed in modernised courtesan clothing. It might have come across as a pirate costume if not for the jewelled collar he wore - traditional to omegan courtesans. Tight, knee-length trousers with courtier-style heels. The flouncy off-white shirt, was open at his throat - revealing a little of his chest - and covered by a waist-length jacket that was flared to imitate a bustle. Of course he had add white powdered makeup and red eyeshadow to give the effect of being a deceased courtesan - it *was* Halloween after all. He knew, all in all, the overall effect was breathtaking. Or should have been.

Char was willing to admit that the alphas indifference to him was intriguing. And if he was set on only having a straightforward hookup tonight, it might as well be with the least interested person in the room. After all he was never one to shy from a challenge.

He didn't want to seem too obvious, so he let another alpha fall over himself to bring him a drink from the packed kitchen. He took the offered drink - Halloween punch complete with imitation eyeballs that were likely peeled grapes in a little red go-cup - and smiled before walking away. He casually sauntering towards the intriguing fellow by the window.

"Something interesting out there?" Char practically purred as he moved behind the alpha then leaned past him to look out the window. He could have easily stepped next to him to see, but this way he could press himself close.

The alpha glanced at him and back to the window without a word. This was the first alpha he'd met who hadn't swooned at the sight of him. He practically had his own fanclub on campus - even though he found that a bit much.

Char turned his huff inward and was momentarily annoyed at the quality of his costume. Instead of going for some cheap imitation collar, he was wearing a family heirloom - his great grandfather's collar. It was in no way shody and did its job well - which was to appropriately hide the sight and smell of the scent glands of a bonded omega. But Char was certainly not bonded and, as alluring as it made his costume for those who wanted a chance to peak beneath, it also meant that it was useless to try and express his interest by wafting his scent at the alpha. It put him at a disadvantage he was not used to.

He stepped next to the alpha then, looking out the window, still unable to see what he looked for other than their own visages reflected back. He glanced at his own - beautiful and enticing by design. His companion's face held a frown over those scars and marred eye that had Char turning to him with a smile and asking - "what makes you frown at such a party and in such company?"

The alpha turned towards him again then, more than just a glance now and it stole Char's breath as he realised it was neither a mask nor makeup. They were real, not affected at all,

and did nothing to dull the alpha's striking features. He was attractive in a way that stole Char's breath and caused him to pulse with desire - as he never had before.

"Oh." The sound escaped him quietly and yet it felt like it filled the whole room as the alpha's frown wavered for a moment into something more painful.

Before Char had chance to form further words - not that he was entirely sure what on earth they would be - the alpha turned on his heel and strode across the room and to the stairs. He was gone within a minute as Char watched his retreating back… and then glanced around the room to see all those alphas in the fraternity now looking at him. Hard looks, glares with accusations clear.

The alpha closest to him muttered, with no little venom - "what did you say to him?"

"Nothing… I…" Char was confused. He rarely was scalded by anyone other than his uncle and even then was never sure it was justified. He was a spoilt brat who liked to play players but the thought of hurting someone's feelings didn't sit well with him. Had the alpha taken offence at his reaction? Perhaps he wasn't interested in omegas.

"What did he say to Frank?" Another alpha chimed in and the whole room seemed to be turning inward on him with hostility. It wasn't something he was used to and it was both upsetting and unnerving.

"I'll check he's ok." The alpha closest to him replied to the question and then turned to Char. "You should leave."

Char felt a drop in his stomach and a lump in his throat. He'd never been uninvited from something before and it was a blow to his self-esteem as much as his pride. What omega is ever uninvited?

He looked around the room and heads were slowly turning to him, conversations dying leaving the music as the only sound - the *Monster Mash* playing surreally as a background. He could feel the mood of the room, scent it on the alpha's pheromones. He was no longer welcome here and it would soon spread beyond too. Once these guys got back to classes and relayed what had happened - whatever *had* happened - to their classmates and teammates he would be socially shunned. He could sense it in their reactions. The alpha he'd upset was important, even more important to them than a free omega.

His thoughts quickly returned to the fact that he was about to become a social outcast. He had to fix the situation. Before anyone could say or do anything further, Char walked briskly across the room and up the stairs

"I'll apologise." Char said firmly as he went, following the scent of the alpha and leaving unhappy mutterings behind him.

Upstairs the house was more homely - less *frat* - and the only Halloween decoration was the skeleton hanging on the bathroom door. The corridor had a couple boxes, a laundry basket. General ephemera of life. Frank's bedroom was at the end of the hall as far as his scent allowed, and Char hesitated when he got there. Each of the doors had crudely drawn symbols

associated with their inhabitant. He recognised Slannen's room - an alpha from the swim team - his symbol was a little elf hat, something to do with his nickname which Char couldn't place. Frank's bedroom door just held one, imposing, eye.

He had no idea what to say. He had never upset anyone before… well, not unintentionally - and pissing off his uncle barely counted. He had little idea how to make it right, other than knowing simply that he had to.

He fixed his resolve and knocked on the door. The first rapp loud, and then two quieter as he lost his nerve a little. There was a shuffling noise inside but no reply. He wanted to give up and turn away but his reputation was at stake, plus there was a scent drifting through that drew him closer to the door. He'd never scented it before but knew instinctively it was the scent of an alpha in distress. He knocked again, firm, a strange desire to relieve that distress.

"Are you alright?" He asked through the door. "I just… I wanted to apologise and make sure you are ok."

What could he have done that had distressed such a physically robust and clearly socially important and respected alpha in this way?

There was more shuffling and then finally the door opened.

The alpha glared at him wordlessly, and Char wondered if he was in fact, by intruding in this way, making things much worse.

"Can… can I come in?" Char asked, feeling awkward being held in limbo on the threshold.

The alpha looked a little, well - if not appalled - shocked at the request of an omega to enter the bedroom of an alpha. *Traditional* - Char considered, and wondered if he really was making things worse. But then the alpha stepped aside and let Char into the room.

It was neat and tidy, and sparse - very few possessions cluttering the place. The whole room smelled pungently, but very pleasantly, of the alpha. Char took it all in for a moment before looking back to Frank, who cast his hand at the desk chair next to the basic desk. A clearly well used area covered in tidy piles of books and notes and a loan-laptop from one of the university departments. Char sat as indicated and watched as the alpha moved to perch on the end of his bed, leaving the door open like any respectful and traditional alpha would.

"I just wanted to apologise. I'm not sure exactly what I did to offend you, but clearly I upset you and want to say I'm sorry for that." Char muttered nervously. He had rarely given apologies before one way or the other and hoped he was doing it right. He certainly felt sincere and hoped that came across. He had wanted to apologise for his own social standing, but now that he scented the alpha still a little distressed and uncomfortable he really deeply meant it. It made him feel embarrassed and a little ill to know he had unsettled someone so much…

But also exasperated. How could he have upset someone by flirting with them!? Someone who wouldn't even deign to talk to him!

A moment too many of silence passed and Char broke. “If you don’t accept my apology that’s fine. I meant it nonetheless.” He spoke gruffly as he stood and started to stalk back to the open door. That seemed to startle the silent alpha into action and he grabbed Char’s wrist to stop him.

Char stopped and looked down at the alpha’s large hand circling his entire wrist, trying not to think of how warm it felt, as he snapped at him - “What? I don’t know what else I can say but sorry.”

The alpha let go of Char quickly, as though it were improper to touch an omega in such a way, and then-

- *Oh fuck.* -

-he raised his hands and moved them slowly, deliberately and... clearly signing that he wasn’t able to speak.

“Shit.” Char couldn’t believe how much worse he was making this by the second. “I’m sorry, I didn’t know. I… can you… fuck, can you hear me ok? Is it just…” Char babbled as his face went red, conscious of trying not to offend further. “I don’t know how to sign… do you know what I’m saying? Fuck!”

The smile that twitched at the corners of the alpha’s mouth pulled one at the edge of his own in response, not that he meant it to.

The alpha signed, simply again - clearly for Char’s benefit - pointing to an ear and then giving the thumbs up, then miming drawing a zipper along the seam of his lips, turning an imaginary key in an imaginary lock and throwing it over his shoulder.

Char smiled at that and the alpha smiled in return.

“Ok, cool. I thought… well I guess I’ve already upset you enough today, I didn’t want to make it even worse. I... I’m still not quite sure what I did, but I’m sorry I upset you. Um, sorry for flirting with you I guess?”

The alpha held up one finger, a request for Char to wait, and then reached to the bedside table and picked up a plastic board - the kind you put on fridges to write a to-do list. He grabbed the marker attached to it and wrote quickly and then handed the board to Char.

It’s ok. I’m sorry if I upset you. Parties overwhelm me and I don’t like making people feel uncomfortable.

Char frowned and handed the board back, looking down at alpha. “You didn’t make me feel uncomfortable.”

Curious now, and with no other plans and - he had to admit - no less interest in the alpha, Char stepped over and took a seat next to him on the bed. At that the alpha seemed to go rigid and the scent of discomfort arose again.

“What is it… Do I… Don’t you like me?” Char asked, pride definitely wounded. Not that he was attempting to seduce the guy, but if the alpha didn’t even want him sat next to him, that… well it never felt nice to be rejected by an alpha. He assumed.

The alpha let out a heavy sigh and stood, moving quickly to the desk chair and sitting there instead before wiping the board clean and starting over. He held it for Char to read -

You’re a bonded omega, it’s not appropriate for you to be in my room and sit on my bed with me.

Ok, well that made sense even if it was inaccurate. But that still didn’t explain why he had been so upset with Char in the first place.

“I’m… I’m not bonded. I mean, damn I’m only twenty-two! This is a costume, for Halloween. The collar was my great grandfather’s.” Char explained, absentmindedly lifting his hand and fingering at the edges of the delicately laced collar. He saw the alpha’s eye dart to his fingers and felt his heart race for a moment at the glint in them. “But… uh, that‘s not what upset you. Right?” Char pressed, biting on his lower lip under an increasingly intense gaze, before the alpha turned back to his board.

I thought you were bonded and flirting with me. It was inappropriate and upset me.

Char nodded. Again, it made sense but was wrong. But then he was wiping the board and writing more, seemingly hesitating over the words.

And I thought I upset you. I don't like the feeling that I repulse people.

Char frowned, and then realised that the alpha was referring to his reaction when he realised the scars and missing eye were in fact real and not a costume. “Oh! No.. no that’s not-”

He was writing again.

I should never have gone to the party. This shit always happens at Halloween.

Char’s frown deepened and he sighed. “I wasn’t repulsed by you. I was surprised, yes. But only because I thought that you… Look I spent a lot of time and money on this costume and I thought that you had too, and then I realised that wasn’t the case and… I get how it seemed.” He deflated a little. “But really, it wasn’t you. Wasn’t because of how you look. I mean… have you seen you? Damn, I’m sort of glad your face is messed up, if it wasn’t I’d probably have been stunned into complete silence or begging you to bond me.”

Char realised his words immediately and slapped a hand over his mouth as his face heated and he cringed. Did he just call his face messed up? Did he just say he wanted to bond?

“I mean…” he lowered his hand a little to speak, muffled, through it - grasping for the right thing to say and not finding it. “Your scent is pretty… well, it’s pretty wonderful so with looks too.”

Fuck! He was saying this all wrong.

But… the alpha was grinning at him. He looked down long enough to scribble something and hold the board out again.

Don't worry, people never know what to say to me. But none have ever been so nice. Sort of.

That made Char chuckle and he drew his hand delicately away from his mouth. Not even thinking about it, an automatic flirtation. He watched the alpha's eye track the motion, that same glint back. Char smiled as he looked up - but the alpha looked sharply away and colour rose in his cheeks.

"Hey, what is it?" Char asked. There was no scent of distress now, but there was something still lingering - an anxiety hanging over the alpha. Char was unsure how he'd gone from coming to a frat party for some fun and sex to giving a shit about how an absolute stranger felt. "Um, Frank?"

The alpha looked at him, almost coy.

"That's your name right?" Char asked, getting a slight nod in return.

"Frank, I'm sorry I upset you, but you didn't upset me so I want you to stop worrying about that okay?"

Frank frowned and then nodded again, but started to wipe the board and scribble again.

I'm sorry, I'm not good with omegas.

"Oh I'm relieved it isn't just me!" Char exclaimed flirtatiously. "I was worried I was losing my knack."

That earned him a small smile, but Frank was still cowed all the same. Char wondered if he should just leave, this guy was clearly not comfortable with him being there and he had done as he meant and apologised.

Char stood and straightened his jacket. "Okay, well…" he started to the door. "I guess I should leave you in peace. Maybe I'll see you downstairs later?" Char turned for the answer and was taken aback by the pained expression on the alpha's face, even as he nodded.

Char felt torn. "Frank, do you… um, would you like me to stay?"

The hesitation was followed by a slow nod, as he bit at his lower lip and the blush reached further up his cheeks. Char found himself wanting to kiss everywhere the pinkness touched. And perhaps it showed in his face because then Frank looked quickly away again. A moment of writing later and he was showing the board once more.

I liked when you flirted with me. Omegas here are strange. But I like you.

Char smiled a lopsided smile and let out a sigh. "I guess you don't have much experience with omegas?" - a gentle head shake - "And… I'm guessing from you traditional leanings, you didn't grow up in Frell? Maybe somewhere a little more old fashioned?"

A nod then and he scribbled at the bottom of the board - **Valhöll**

Char understood a whole lot more then. “Oh.” he turned back to the door and gently shut it before moving across the room to Frank, who seemed to be breathing ever heavier breaths as he approached.

“In Valhöll I hear things are still pretty traditional? Well, um… it’s not like that here. Omega’s Lib, you know?” He was standing right in front of the alpha then, looking down at his bowed head. “We’re free with ourselves, with our bodies. We’re not ashamed - we’re not made to feel ashamed. If an omega sleeps around, like I do, well… we’re worshipped Frank. You know? We’re loved and respected. We’re worshipped for allowing alphas to experience us. It doesn’t diminish us, it’s beautiful.” Char could practically feel the alpha shaking.

He lowered his hand to Frank’s cheek and stroked over it, before hooking gentle fingers under his chin and raised it until they were eye to eye.

“When I saw you across the room I decided I wanted to share myself with you tonight. I still do. If you would like that?”

Frank let out a shuddering breath and closed his eyes. For a moment Char thought the alpha would deny him. And how horrible that would be!

Instead went back to his board, wiped and wrote in a shaky hand -

I’m not a virgin. I just am not used to omegas like you.

Char was glad that there was nothing he could interpret there as disdain or worse. And he certainly couldn’t interpret it in the quivering hands that held the board. They shook as Char took it and placed it on the desk before taking hold of the alpha’s hands and drawing him to his feet. They were of a comfortable height to each other, it was not a far reach for him to gently press his lips to Frank’s. Just a chaste overture that had the alpha breathing hard. The alpha seemed torn - hesitation still there.

“Would you like that?” Char repeated, no intention of taking advantage of an overwhelmed alpha, no matter his own desire. It was for the alpha to choose.

Frank closed his eye and nodded, before seeking Char’s mouth again. Char moaned into the kiss as Frank’s tongue traced the seam of his lips - taking no more than that for him to open to the alpha.

Frank grew more intense, pulling Char tight to him and his hardening length, kissing him hard and deep. With gentle hands on his chest Char eased him back until he was able to break the kiss. Frank’s eye opened, searching Char’s expression for a reason for the hesitation.

“I want you to knot me alpha.” Char said softly, letting a little musical note into his voice - just enough to calm any alpha. “But the rest is your choice. I could submit for you, or dominate you… what would you prefer?”

Frank frowned and stepped back a little, his breath levelling as he reached for his board. He wrote quickly, a scrawl -

I don’t want either of those things. I just want you to be you.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Char isn't sure if one night with this alpha will be enough...

I don’t want either of those things. I just want you to be you.

He scrubbed the board and wrote again.

I’ve seen you around, Charmont. Char? I like your smile, I’ve seen you laughing with your friend. I like how joyful you are. Will you be like that with me?

Char felt a pang in his chest and smile pull at his lips, until it formed into something uncharacteristically bashful.

Char was popular so it wasn't a surprise that Frank knew him, but making note of his smile was something no alpha had done before, that he knew. They waxed lyrical about his form and scent… never that he seemed joyful. It made Char feel warm. He regretted not knowing the alpha sooner.

And yet he also seemed popular, with the frat alphas at least. Very few obviously scholarship alphas got into fraternities.

“I haven't seen you around. I wish I had.” Char admitted on a sigh. “Your frat brothers think very highly of you.” Char idled his fingers over Frank’s arm, finding a need within him to make contact.

Frank smiled gently then wrote again -

I keep to myself, stay in the shadows mostly. They like me because I saved Slannen.

He chuffed a laugh as he showed the board, self deprecating. Char’s eyes went wide. The story was campus legend, though Char wouldn't have even connected it, which of course he should have as it was the story of a one-eyed man.

“That was you?” Char enjoyed Frank’s blush. The story was that Slannen - petite for an alpha - was getting beat on by a rival swim team at a meet. They had cornered him after he had won his competition. Fragile alpha’s not wanting to be shown up by one not as butch as them. The rest of the swim team - his frat brothers - got there to find some one-eyed scholarship loner had happened upon the scene and beaten down the five other alphas. Slannen had been in a bad way but it was said that if his rescuer hadn’t been there they might have killed him, so crazy the situation got.

No wonder he was so loved by the frat. No wonder they wanted to do all they could to protect him socially the way he had saved Slannen from assault.

“You're a bit of a hero around here.” Char smiled.

A soft smile was just forming as Frank shrugged, a slight blush on his cheeks. He placed down the board and cupped Char’s face in his hands. It made Char gasp softly and angle his lips up - so very responsive.

Frank drew him in gently, as gentle as the kiss they then shared. Char moaned softly as Frank’s hands caressed down the side of his throat - over the collar, making some of the jewels tinkle. And then further down - stroking down his sides until they rested on Char’s hips and inched them forward so that both their now interested sex pressed together.

Frank only stilled for a moment but then continued to pull Char, with him this time as he stepped back towards the bed. The alpha pulled back, moving enough to take Char’s hand and guide him to the bed, letting the omega lay himself back on the plain comforter and pillow - truly a work of art against the blank canvas.

“Will you be the tender alpha who shows this courtesan another way to love?” Char joked, though the humorous tone faltered on his lips as the expression on Frank’s face told him that was exactly his intention. It brought forth a low whine in Char and made his sex pulse and leak a little slick into the seat of his pants.

Frank smiled - something sweet and loving. Not the usual charm and flirtation alphas normally showered him with. It made Char feel weak at the knees, another swell of slick had him biting at his lower lip in anticipation.

Char admired the alpha’s form as he moved forward, kneeling nearly between Char’s thighs - his shirt drawn taut.

“Would… would you undress for me? I want to see you.” Char breathed out the words, tinged with a nervousness he’d never felt before.

A dark look passed over Frank’s countenance and he hesitated.

Char wondered what he had said wrong and felt suddenly nervous, which was an interesting sensation. He’d never really been nervous bedding alphas - after all it came naturally to omegas. But everything about this encounter so far was not exactly like any fling he’d had before and that should probably set off alarm bells. He shifted a little, starting to wonder whether this was a good idea.

That seemed to draw Frank’s attention and he looked like he was worried - maybe at the idea of Char leaving? He wasn’t sure. Even so Frank bit his lower lip and started to pull off his thin black knit.

Char gasped as the fabric revealed each inch of skin slowly. A little taut paunch, topped with a muscular upper body and furred chest. All very impressive, but that wasn’t what had stolen

Char's breath - that was caused by the mixture of marks across Frank's skin. Blue-pigment tattoos swirling over skin, some cut through with scars, others over the top of them.

Frank had frozen at his gasp and stilled with his shirt in his hands, looking away nervously.

"You're so beautiful." Char breathed out the words. Meaning them utterly. He had flattered alphas before, but this wasn't that. He couldn't even explain the draw he felt towards the alpha in that moment. He had never before seen skin that told a story… even one so tragic.

The pain of it hit him and he sat forward without thinking, taking Frank's shirt from his hands and throwing it to the floor. He slid his hands into Frank's.

"Tell me about them?" Char asked, and Frank looked at him at that. He frowned for a moment and then moved as though he was going to reach for his board, but Char held his hands tight. "No, you can tell me without that." Char smiled gently and tugged at Frank's hands, moving himself at the same time so that when the alpha lowered down, they lay on their sides facing each other.

Char's hands had released Frank as they moved and now he traced one of the large blue coils on Frank's chest with a finger. He traced it to where it was intersected by a scar, letting his finger then follow the scar instead.

"Your people mark your coming of age with the blue." Char muttered and Frank gave a slow nod. "They are a traditional people. They mark important events." Another slow nod.

Char let his hand snake back down to Frank's pulling it up between them and laying a gentle kiss on the back of his hand and down to his wrist. This was how it was done, how omegas seduced and gave themselves, but this felt like more than usual. He found he cared about every mark on Frank's skin… because he understood them. Understood this part of Frank's life.

Char hadn't grown up in Frell either. Until his parents had died and he'd come to live with his uncle, he'd grown up in Lamia. A modern country on the edge of some much more traditional territories. The practice of tattooing in this way was not unknown to him. And neither were the scars. He'd seen them before on a couple of servants at his parent's estate - one of the stable hands and one that worked for the groundskeeper. He didn't know them personally, but he heard the gossip of the servants - how they had been made to fight for the amusement of what passed as *nobility* in those places.

Frank couldn't be much older than him - maybe a senior - but he must have been young when he'd been forced to fight. Perhaps at the onset of his secondary puberty? No wonder he had been able to fight off five others his size. The thought tore through Char and he surged forward, pressing kisses along the marks and scars of Frank's chest until his force pushed the alpha onto his back.

Frank's hands fluttered lightly over him, over his ornate clothes so far removed from this alpha's life. No wonder he had been apprehensive. Omegas in his country were not like Char, life was not like this in his country. Char was deeply curious as to how he had left there; how he was now at university here; what he studied; what he wanted to do in the future; his

favourite colour and flavour of icecream. Did he like ice cream? Could they get some together?

Char quashed the thoughts as he pulled back and looked deeply into the alpha's eye. "These were earned by a strong alpha. Stronger than you wanted to be…" Char cupped the side of Frank's face as he tried to look away. "You don't need to be strong with me."

Frank closed his eye and let out a trembling sigh, leaving Char hoping he hadn't offended him.

"This is me, being myself as you asked. And you don't need to be strong with me." Char said shakily, feeling strangely as vulnerable as the alpha likely did. Frank's eye shot open at that, his expression amused as he pulled his hand back to wave it up and down Char - indicating his clothing. Frank's gaze ended settled on the collar, a heated look there before he met Char's eyes again.

"Oh? You're saying this isn't me being myself? That I'm not a courtesan? How dare you." Char grinned. "I'll have you know I come from a long line of courtesans… just because there are no courts now doesn't mean I can't be a courtesan!" He huffed with his own amused indignance. "Don't… don't you want me if I'm a courtesan?" Char asked, genuinely and confusingly nervous at the possibility that Frank might reject him.

Frank's smile went from amused to something altogether softer and he shook his head - he did want him.

He moved then, pushing so that he had Char on his back and was able to look up and down his beautifully adorned body. His eye ended focused on Char's lips before leaning in for a soft kiss. It was slow and deep and had Char arching up, trying to press as much of his body against the alpha's as possible.

He was purring even before gentle hands worked over his clothes and he realised immediately, even as they loosened at fastenings, the alpha had no intention of undressing him but would take him like this. Instead he loosened the modern belt that mimicked the more fanciful - and fiddly fittings of the past - so that his trousers loosened. He untucked Char's flouncy shirt and hesitated only a moment before settling his hand on the flesh beneath. Char gasped anew as the strong and calloused hand moved lightly over his skin - feeling his way up and under the shirt to Char's chest and then lightly stroking a nipple. Char moaned at that and arched again.

"Alpha…" He whined.

Frank's breath stuttered in response, and Char could feel the alpha growing even harder against his thigh.

"Please…" Char whispered. It was permission as much as a plea, and Frank took it, repositioning himself in one smooth motion, between Char's thighs. His hand still played lightly over Char's nipple, the other one helping keep him balanced. Frank leaned in to scent at the shirt - where it opened up to his throat, revealing just a little of the top of his chest. He

had started to rock as he did so, gently pressing their lengths together through their clothes, for some leisurely pleasure.

Char thought for a moment - hoped - the alpha was going to scent his neck, that sensitive and taboo place. But he had hidden it hadn't he? And he became suddenly aware of that when Frank pulled back and a flash of distress crossed his features.

"You… you can remove it if you like." Char told him gently. "I'm not anyone's, it's just a costume." He reminded the alpha.

With another shaky breath, Frank nodded. He pulled his hand free of the shirt as he sat back up between Char's legs. Char could see his hands were shaking as he moved them to Char's neck and started to delicately undo the fastening that kept his throat hidden.

He was careful with it, as though he feared breaking it… or Char. And the look of mixed concern and relief was not lost on Char. How improper it would be in this alpha's country for him to bed an omega collared by someone else. What punishment he might be subject to! It didn't bear thinking of.

As Frank pulled the collar free, he inhaled deeply - Char's rich and now deeply aroused scent all the more pungent for it's removal. After a few long moments and deep, calming inhales, Frank set the collar aside on the bedside table. He all but breathed a sigh of relief, Char could sense how immediately more comfortable the alpha felt.

As much as he could sense the pent up passion there. The expectation of being taken soon, and roughly, made Char's sex pulse and a swell of slick dampened his clothes. But the haste he expected never came. He had never known an alpha so in control of themselves and their lust, it was… bewildering, enchanting.

With deliberate slowness, Frank began to scent his throat, running his nose over the sensitive skin. Char's hands clenched in the bed covers as he trembled at the touch. And then lips touched his skin and he gasped again, this time feeling like he might never breathe again.

Every part of him was aching to be touched and even so he wondered if he might just climax from Frank lavishing his throat with such attention… And then Frank sucked a kiss at his scent gland. Char cried out and arched near off the bed as the spark of it, the shock of it, coursed through him.

He was too caught up in it, too deeply drawn into the sensation and enjoyment of it, that he couldn't even think to resist. This was so taboo, so wrong. Alpha's were never meant to mark omegas in this way unless they were theirs. He wasn't Frank's…

"Please, alpha…" Char moaned and pressed his aching sex up to Frank, grinding them together until the alpha grunted and pulled back. "More…"

Frank made quick work of pulling his own trousers down to his thighs and then carefully, slow once again, unfastening Char's trousers more. He could hear Frank's breath quivering, feel his hands shaking again as he started to pop open each button of the extended fly - from the buckle all the way down to Char's heavy cock and leaking sex. The extended button fly -

that should have been a cod piece - revealing the whole of his sex, was a modern take on a traditional taboo. As was the fact that Char had not worn underwear.

Char spread his legs with no need for encouragement, his cock now free and springing towards his belly, slick flowing from that empty place that so wanted to be filled. He let out a whimper as Frank looked at him, laid out before him and ready, as the alpha began to slowly stroke his own cock.

A few strokes and Frank was moving forward again, trembling as he moved his hips, slowly sinking into Char's waiting sex as he buried his face back at Char's throat. Char moaned and shuddered at the pleasure of being filled by the alpha. Of being taken in a way that was at once gentle and passionate. His cock trapped between them, Char let out little huffs of pleasure at the stimulation of every part of him as Frank thrust, slow and easy.

This was like some fairytale being played out. The prince and the slave, coming together in a strange circumstance and finding they fit well. *Oh so very well*, Char thought as Frank slid further back and then into him again. Slow and tender, and making the slick surge from Char all the more at the gentle press of his growing knot on each push.

And then Frank was sucking at his throat again. Another mark and then another - lacing them all around in place of the collar. This silent alpha who was practically mortified at the sort of omega Char was, taking his pleasure in despoiling his throat. And Char did not for one moment want to stop him.

When Frank's mouth found the scent gland on the other side of his neck, Char cried out again. It was too much, simply too much. Every part of him pulsed, his body begging the alpha to knot him louder than any words might. Frank thrust a couple more times, pressing his knot against Char's entrance a little longer each time, until on the third he pushed it slowly in.

Char's moan ended on the draw of a sharp breath as he was stretched and filled. He climaxed then, his hands grasping for Frank and holding tight to him, crushing his thighs against the man as he spilled between them.

Frank let out a throaty and broken growl as he came, closing his good eye tight shut and clearly enjoying the sensation of Char tightening around him. His breath stuttered and he tried for another growl but it was lost to whatever had taken the alpha's voice. As lost as Char felt, he was sure. So utterly lost in this alpha and never wanting to be found.

They lay, tied, for what seemed an eternity. Frank had collapsed forward onto Char and the omega was stroking gentle fingers through his haphazard hair.

"You like me as a courtesan." Char muttered.

Frank nodded and let out a heavy, but pleasant sigh.

"You like that I'm a courtesan but that I choose you. You like it so much you chose me back…" Char said almost to himself as he moved his fingers from Frank's hair to his own tender throat.

Frank pulled back and looked at him, an apology there in that worried frown.

Char smiled. “Don’t worry. I liked it too. A pleasant fantasy for us.” Frank’s frown twitched for a moment and he rested his head back down on Char’s chest.

They remained that way until Frank was able to pull from him ten or so minutes later. Char felt the loss keenly, and knew he would be happy to spend the rest of the night with the alpha. Maybe longer...

“I… I could stay over if you like? I would just need to let my housemate know. She worries.”

Frank had moved off the bed, hiked his trousers back up and grabbed a towel from his cupboard. When he turned back he looked over Char again and nodded as the blush rose on his cheeks. What a sight he must be - he’d made a complete mess of his costume, which he was still fully ensconced in other than the rucking of his shirt and the complete unfastening of his trousers.

Char reached a hand for the towel and Frank gave it with an even greater blush… and a moment’s hesitation as he looked over Char like he was something he could eat. The thought made Char’s cheeks heat too as he imagined the alpha cleaning him with his tongue. His cock twitched valiantly and he lay the towel over his lap as he moved to sitting on the edge of the bed.

Frank was grabbing some bottled water from the shelf as Char pulled his phone out of the jacket pocket and fired off a message to Ella. He replaced the phone and started to shrug out of his jacket,

“This is getting, um, pretty warm.” he chuckled and Frank smiled, setting down the water on the bedside table. Then he helped Char out of the jacket. When Char went to unfasten his shirt, Frank moved his hands over his and took over the job, sliding the shirt from Char’s shoulders. He gently kissed across the skin as he exposed it. Not something born utterly of desire, something soft and tender - worshipful.

Char trembled under the touch - something he had never done before. He didn’t stop trembling as Frank settled in front of him and helped slide of his shoes, and then his long socks and then the trousers they had near destroyed between them. Only the towel remained as Char resumed his seat on the bed.

“I’m no longer a courtesan.” Char joked with a low chuckle to hide his sudden nervousness.

Frank gave a lopsided grin and reached for the board, scribbling before taking a seat next to Char and showing him.

You’ll always be a courtesan to me.

Char smiled as Frank stood again and pulled him to his feet. He held up a finger to indicate Char should wait, then turned down the bed and indicated it with a flourish of his hand.

“You want to snuggle?” Char teased. Frank grinned and raised a brow, which drew another light chuckle from Char.

He reached and took hold of Franks trouser’s still undone, and pulled them open before down and off. Then he crawled into the bed and looked up to admire the alpha’s naked form. It made him ache again, and he let out a heavy breath. He turned away and then looked back at Frank over his shoulder.

“Snuggle me tight alpha?” Char barely managed to keep his voice level as desire flooded through him and slick started to pulse from him. He whined when he saw Frank scent the air, and barely resisted the urge to bare his neck. Instead he held out his hand to guide the alpha to him.

Frank went with a low growl from somewhere in his chest.

*

Char woke snuggled into a pillow that was definitely not his. The lack of puff feathers and low thread count alone were indicators, but the scent made it undeniable. The strong and warming alpha scent that seemed to wrap all the way around him. Along with the strong, warm alpha himself.

Char had to make the concerted effort not to purr as he snuggled back for a moment. He rarely had sleepovers and never usually got this cosy. He knew he should leave, and yet he was finding it extremely difficult to do so. This was the first alpha that had done more than worship him for being omega. It felt like he had worshipped Char for being himself and that was something that might be all too easy to get used to. Not that he would have the chance - he wasn’t going to read anything into it, clearly that was just how this alpha did things. He wasn’t from these parts, had his own traditions and cultural norms, that would likely inform the way he interacted with omegas. Of course it would, Char already knew that from what the alpha had said - written.

He really should get up.

Frank started to stir before he had chance to think further along those lines, snuggling in tighter, slotting perfectly at Char’s back and nuzzling into his neck. Char wondered what he might say if he were able to speak. What he might sign if Char understood it.

Char turned his head enough to dislodge the alpha so that they were looking at each other - lips so close it would be easy to close the distance - knot again - for the fourth time since their meeting. Frank broke into a warm and gentle smile, though the glint in his eye was more lust than anything.

“Good morning.” Char said with a smile of his own.

Frank’s smile grew ever so slightly and he closed and opened his eye slowly as some sort of acknowledgement… that had Char wanting to lace the man’s face with light kisses. His smile faltered a little at that - bringing back that feeling of vulnerability from the night before.

“I should go.” Char blurted and started to extricate himself from the warm and all too delicious embrace. He sat on the edge of the bed, still naked, as he grabbed his jacket from the floor and wrestled his phone from the discreet pocket in the pleating so that he could check the time.

It was after ten!

Char practically fell off the bed in his effort to get up. He didn’t want people to get the wrong idea. He was still unmated, unbonded, a free omega- staying so late might have people talking and saying the opposite. It might have them thinking he wasn’t available to them, when he more than happily was… Wasn’t he? There was a slight twinge of something at the thought - a flutter in his chest that was more painful than pleasant at the idea of being available.

He looked down at the alpha on the bed, who had rolled to his back now that there was the room, and was looking up at the ceiling. A sort of resolved sadness in his expression.

“This is why you hesitated isn’t it?” Char wondered aloud, realising he had to speak for the both of them if they were to easily converse. “You didn’t want to be with an omega who isn’t going to stay.”

Char smiled reassuringly. He’d had plenty of his flings try to court him, but none had ever seemed quite as glum as Frank did now when he denied them. A return to the dour and serious look of the day before.

Frank huffed and shook his head, turning to look up at Char then with an almost pleading expression, as if willing him to understand, lifting a finger and pointing at Char - directly at his chest.

“Me? This is about me?” Char’s eyebrows knit together. “You don’t like that I’m a free omega?” the question was laced through each word - questioning whether that was *what* he meant, rather than *why* he might mean it.

Frank held out his hand and Char, for some reason he didn’t even know himself, took it and allowed the alpha to draw him back down to the bed and on top of him - the blankets between their naked forms.

They looked at each other a long while, perhaps both hoping Char could read Frank’s mind, before the alpha lifted a gentle hand. He placed his fingers against Char’s neck - lightly tracing over his scent gland - where the collar had been. The area now laced with deeply sucked and bruising kisses. The thought again of being marked by the alpha sent a shudder through him - even so he forced out the words-

“You shouldn’t have done that. I’m not yours to mark. Not anybodies.” Char was trembling as he said the words and the fingers continued to draw little circles over each mark.

Frank didn’t for one moment look contrite, but he did look resolved. Determined. His hand snaked behind Char’s neck and pulled him closer so that Char could feel his breath against his neck. His intention to suck further marks into his neck was so clear it almost had Char

whimpering. Frank had stopped though, still holding him so close but looking up with a questioning glance -

- Did Char want this too? Was this alright? Could he, dare he?

“Yes…” Char breathed out the word with what little control he had left. At the word he thought for a moment that Frank would devour him, but instead he simply pulled Char closer and continued the tracing action of his fingers with his tongue. Then his lips. And then he was sucking gently at Char’s neck - so deliciously painful and pleasurable all in one. Char thought he might come apart, wondered how he had never let an alpha do this before - glad that he hadn’t, that this was theirs.

Suddenly time didn’t matter. Not much mattered at all but the alpha he had found in such a strange and unexpected way. *His* alpha. He knew, he knew it so deeply. This was something he had never looked for or wanted, but every part of his body was crying out with need to be taken - mated, bonded, loved forever by this man.

Pleasure over took him then and Char began to fight the covers that lay between them, desperate for skin to skin contact as his mind narrowed to two thoughts: Having the alpha inside him once more; and making immediate enquiries as to where he could learn sign language.

Well, almost immediate.

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